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KERR SAYS CIA IS 'HERE TO STAY'

McLean, VA, 21 Sep -- The Central Intelligence Agency is "here to stay," according to Acting Director of Central Intelligence Richard J. Kerr.

Speaking this morning at the CIA's annual "Family Day" festivities at the Agency's Headquarters Building, Mr. Kerr said: "I can guarantee you that the CIA is here to stay. The problems this nation faces -- and the complexity of those problems -- require more intelligence, not less."

"There are some who would say that things were much easier in a world that was neat -- black and white," Mr. Kerr said. "But from an intelligence perspective, it is going to be far more exciting in a complicated world. We are looking at a fundamental set of changes in the world that will have a significant impact on intelligence."

Praising the integrity, capability, and enthusiasm of CIA employees, Mr. Kerr said "there is no organization, in my experience, that has a group of people as dedicated and committed as this one."

"All of the technical means and other stuff is interesting, but fundamentally we depend on people here -- we depend on their integrity, capability, and enthusiasm."

Mr. Kerr said that while there may now be some criticism of the Agency and some "pressure" on the organization, he added: "An organization that

contributes and is fundamental to a process is going to be caught in the drama of criticism and pressure."

Mr. Kerr added: "We should look at the future as an opportunity -- an opportunity to change and an opportunity to improve our performance. We have a future that is exciting."

Mr. Kerr said CIA employees and their families can take "extraordinary pride" in what the organization has accomplished over the past year. He particularly noted the Intelligence Community's performance during the Gulf war, which he said was superb "from beginning to end."

More than 5000 Agency employees and family members attended the festivities.